

§ 1620.9

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may be both jointly or severally responsible for compliance with the statutory requirements applicable to employment of a particular employee.

§ 1620.9 Meaning of “establishment.”

(a) Although not expressly defined in the FLSA, the term “establishment” had acquired a well settled meaning by the time of enactment of the Equal Pay Act. It refers to a distinct physical place of business rather than to an entire business or “enterprise” which may include several separate places of business. Accordingly, each physically separate place of business is ordinarily considered a separate establishment.

(b) In unusual circumstances, two or more portions of a business enterprise, even though located in a single physical place of business, may constitute more than one establishment. For example, the facts might reveal that these portions of the enterprise are physically segregated, engaged in functionally separate operations, and have separate employees and maintain separate records. Conversely, unusual circumstances may call for two or more distinct physical portions of a business enterprise being treated as a single establishment. For example, a central administrative unit may hire all employees, set wages, and assign the location of employment; employees may frequently interchange work locations; and daily duties may be virtually identical and performed under similar working conditions. Barring unusual circumstances, however, the term “establishment” will be applied as described in paragraph (a) of this section.

§ 1620.10 Meaning of “wages.”

Under the EPA, the term “wages” generally includes all payments made to [or on behalf of] an employee as remuneration for employment. The term includes all forms of compensation irrespective of the time of payment, whether paid periodically or deferred until a later date, and whether called wages, salary, profit sharing, expense account, monthly minimum, bonus, uniform cleaning allowance, hotel accommodations, use of company car, gasoline allowance, or some other name. Fringe benefits are deemed to be remuneration for employment. “Wages”

as used in the EPA (the purpose of which is to assure men and women equal remuneration for equal work) will therefore include payments which may not be counted under section 3(m) of the FLSA toward the minimum wage (the purpose of which is to assure employees a minimum amount of remuneration unconditionally available in cash or in board, lodging or other facilities). Similarly, the provisions of section 7(e) of the FLSA under which some payments may be excluded in computing an employee’s “regular rate” of pay for purposes of section 7 do not authorize the exclusion of any such remuneration from the “wages” of an employee in applying the EPA. Thus, vacation and holiday pay, and premium payments for work on Saturdays, Sundays, holidays, regular days of rest or other days or hours in excess or outside of the employee’s regular days or hours of work are deemed remuneration for employment and therefore wage payments that must be considered in applying the EPA, even though not a part of the employee’s “regular rate.”

§ 1620.11 Fringe benefits.

(a) “Fringe benefits” includes, e.g., such terms as medical, hospital, accident, life insurance and retirement benefits; profit sharing and bonus plans; leave; and other such concepts.

(b) It is unlawful for an employer to discriminate between men and women performing equal work with regard to fringe benefits. Differences in the application of fringe benefit plans which are based upon sex-based actuarial studies cannot be justified as based on “any other factor other than sex.”

(c) Where an employer conditions benefits available to employees and their spouses and families on whether the employee is the “head of the household” or “principal wage earner” in the family unit, the overall implementation of the plan will be closely scrutinized.

(d) It is unlawful for an employer to make available benefits for the spouses or families of employees of one gender where the same benefits are not made available for the spouses or families of opposite gender employees.

(e) It shall not be a defense under the EPA to a charge of sex discrimination